

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are now pending in the application. By this Paper, claims 1, 3, 5, 11, 18, and 21 have been amended. Claim 25 has been added. Support for any claim amendments and additions can be found throughout the application as originally filed. As such, no new matter has been presented. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the remarks and amendments contained herein.

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

The undersigned attorney would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended during a telephonic interview conducted on 13 May 2010. During the interview, the undersigned attorney explored the differences between the subject invention and the cited art. The claims have been amended herein in a manner consistent with the interview. While a specific agreement was not reached, the Examiner agreed to favorably consider the amended claims upon filing of this Responsive Amendment. No demonstrations were conducted and no exhibits were provided.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 8, 10, 11, 14-19, and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over König (German Pat. No. 39040391) in view of Danly et al. (U.S. Patent No. 2,565,759). Claims 2-5, 9, 12, 13, 20, and 22-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over König in view of Danly et al., as applied

to Claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14-19, and 21, and further in view of Paris & du Rhone (French Pat. No. 2384157 A, hereinafter "Paris"). Claims 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Konig in view of Danly et al., as applied to Claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14-19, and 21, and further in view of Paris. These rejections are respectfully traversed for the reasons below.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that the first retaining element is formed of a generally circular plate and has first and second arcuate sections. Claim 1 additionally recites that the first and second arcuate sections are connected by first and second bridges, both of which have a reduced width compared to the first and second arcuate sections and that the reduced width of the bridges provides resiliency to the first retaining element. Support for the amendments to claim 1 can be found at paragraph [0040] of the specification and Figs. 7 and 8, for example. Amended claim 5 further recites that the bridges flexibly interconnect the first and second arcuate sections.

The limitations added to claim 1 are not taught nor suggested by the art of record. Furthermore, the invention of claim 1 would not have been obvious in view of the collective art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 and claims 2-10 dependent therefrom are in a condition for allowance.

Independent claim 11 has been amended to recite that the first and second sections of the first retaining element are interconnected to one another by first and second resilient bridges of reduced width as compared to the first and second sections. Support for the amendments to claim 11 can be found at paragraphs [0040] and [0041] of the specification and Figs. 7 and 8, for example. Applicants respectfully submit that

claim 11 and claims 12-17 dependent therefrom are in a condition for allowance for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1.

Independent claim 18 has been amended to recite that the first retaining element is formed of a generally circular plate and defines an offset aperture. Claim 18 further recites that the offset center of rotation of the steering wheel relative to the steering column is accommodated by the offset aperture of the first retaining element. Applicants have added new claim 25 which further recites that the first and second sections of the first retaining element are connected by first and second bridges of reduced width. Support for the amendments to claim 18 and new claim 25 can be found at paragraphs [0040] and [0041] of the specification and Figs. 7 and 8, for example.

Applicants respectfully submit that the art of record fails to teach or suggest a retaining plate defining an offset aperture for accommodating an offset steering wheel. New claim 25 further defines over the art for the reasons discussed above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 18 and claims 19-20 and 25 dependent therefrom are in a condition for allowance.

Independent claim 21 has been amended to recite that the first and second portions of the retaining element are coupled to one another by coupling portions that are more resilient than the first and second portions. Support for the amendments to claim 1 can be found at paragraphs [0040] and [0041] of the specification and Figs. 7 and 8, for example.

The limitations added to claim 21 are not taught nor suggested by the art of record. Furthermore, the invention of claim 21 would not have been obvious in view of

the collective art of record. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 21 and claims 22-24 dependent therefrom are in a condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 2 June 2010

By: 

Stephen T. Olson, Reg. No. 36,626
Attorneys for Applicants

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

STO:ca

15315189.1